

NAME: Matsumoto, Masayo DATE OF BIRTH: 1893 PLACE OF BIRTH: Nagano
Age: 81 Sex: F Marital Status: W Education: Teacher's College

PRE-WAR:

Date of arrival in U.S.: _____ Age: _____ M.S. ^{P.C.} M Port of entry: San Fran.
Occupation/s: 1. Domestic work 2. Housewife 3. _____
Place of residence: 1. Los Angeles, Ca. 2. Pasadena, Ca. 3. _____
Religious affiliation: Christian Church
Community organizations/activities: _____

EVACUATION:

Name of assembly center: Santa Anita
Name of relocation center: Tule Lake, Ca.
Dispensation of property: _____ Names of bank/s: _____
Jobs held in camp: 1. _____ 2. _____
Jobs held outside of camp: _____
Left camp to go to: California

POST-WAR:

Date returned to West Coast: _____
Address/es: 1. Pasadena, California 2. _____
3. _____
Religious affiliation: Christian Church
Activities: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: _____

Name of interviewer: Heihachiro Takarabe Date: 9/12/73 Place: Pasadena, Ca.

Translator: Mariko Nagel

Name: Mrs. Masayo Matsumoto

Age: 81 years old

Birthdate: 1893, the 26th year of Meiji

Place of birth: Nagano prefecture

What year you came to the U.S.:

What age did you come to the U.S.:

Major Occupation: Domestic worker

Husband's (wife's) Occupation: Gardener

Relocation Camp: Tule Lake, California

Interview Date: September 12, 1973

Interviewer: Reverend Heihachiro Takarabe

Translator: Mariko Magee

Translated Date: May 10, 1974

NAME: MRS. MASAYO MATSUMOTO

Q: What is your name?

A: My name is Masayo Matsumoto. I was born the second daughter of Matasaku and Toshi Matsumoto, in Nagano prefecture. There were four children in the family.

Q: When were you born?

A: I was born in 1893, the 26th year of Meiji.

Q: What was your family in Japan like?

A: When I was thirty, I was told our family story by my father. According to the story, our father had been within the Shinto priesthood for years. We had been given the surname "Minamoto" by our local lord. My father had attended school with two swords around his waist. When he was in his twenties, the train was invented. He went down to Tokyo to study against the will of his father. My father worked and studied simultaneously. He and some other working students went to Hakubun Ito's house in search of work. There, he met an old rickshaw driver, who was from the same village as my father. In the meantime, my father was forced to return to his home because he had contracted beri-beri. Being a poor student, he had to borrow five yen from the rickshaw driver. The driver told him to return the money to his daughter in the village. The eighteen-year old daughter was very pretty and she sang

a beautiful song in the Obon festival.¹ My father fell in love with her and married her. Their marriage was not easy. His family and relatives were all against the girl because she was from a tenant farmer's family. My father had been married to another girl formerly, but their marriage did not work out. Then, he married my mother. After I was born, my mother became so sick that she could not move. My father, a public office employer, took care of me as soon as he came back from his office. He took me to a hot spring and took me other places with him all of the time. When I visited Japan from the U.S., he showed me his diary. He named me Masayo which means to give politics, because he was interested in politics very much. During my teaching days, my father sent me to a tea ceremony school and a flower arrangement school. Having been raised by my father, I was kind of boyish. He hoped that I would acquire femininity through the learning of the tea ceremony and flower arrangement. The tea ceremony teacher had served tea to the Meiji emperor. My father, being himself involved in village politics, had a hard time repaying the debt handed down by the former village chief. The former chief had borrowed a hundred thousand yen in order to improve the road and streets in the village. Feeling sympathy for our father, I and my younger brother decided to go abroad to earn money and help our father. My mother was herself an uneducated woman, but she forced us to study hard. She made her children pray before the Shinto altar

at home so that we could become bright students. Whenever we passed a shrine at the foot of Mt. Ontake, my mother told us to bow there. She let us take our worn brush pen to the heavenly gods so that we could improve our penmanship. My younger brother was the only son in our family. I was in charge of wrapping rice in paper and putting it on the altar of the heavenly gods. My sister, being such an outstanding young lady, was called, Murasaki Shikibu² by others. She entered a girl's school in Ima county. My mother did not let me go to school until I finished the duties given me by her. My father taught me reading as soon as he came back home from his office. Whenever I did not read clearly, my father forced me to read over and over. Being a good reader at school, I was accused by my classmates of being a teacher's pet. I remember that my father hit me with tongs when he found me sleeping at a desk. Having a lot of rooms, we always rented some of them. One tenant was amazed to see me studying by a torn shoji³ where a cat got through very often. After having attended a teacher's college for two years, I became very sick. My father sold his mountain and other properties in order to send me to the Nagoya University Hospital for six months. I had rheumatism, pleurisy, dilatation of the heart, and nervous debilitation. Though there had been no returning students at the college, I was accepted as a returning student. I graduated in the fourth year of the Taisho period. My father was struggling between

his family religion --Shintoism-- and his own beliefs. He could not believe in Shinto gods and goddesses, which were made by human beings. He was about to leave my mother and younger brother and move to Nagoya with me. I respected him because of his strong conviction. He became interested in the Tenri sect at that time. When I was a child, I stopped eating my favorite food, yellow-tail, and prayed at Suwa shrine that my mother could recover in exchange for my sacrifice. My father was the one who bought medicine for me and mixed egg and milk for me to drink. There were a few maids and two farm laborers working for us. My mother directed all of the workers. My father was working for a public office and made ten yen a month. Being a member of a famous family, I was treated rather courteously by the people in our community. The only grief I had was over my health. I was sick while I was attending the teacher's college and also after graduating from it. I was employed by a county office and got paid nineteen dollars a month. Then I happened to read about "?." I was amazed that it was completely different from Shintoism. Our family religion--Shintoism-- was so strict that I could not feel secure with it. For example, I was told not to sleep with my legs pointing toward the Shinto altar. I was also told that women should not appear in front of the altar when they had a menstrual period. One day, a farmer's daughter told me about a hymn-lesson held at church. As I was interested in any kind of singing, I went to the

hymn-lesson. Reverend Kanzo Ogawa, who was one of Reverend Kagawa's followers, was the assistant minister there. I was moved by reading the Bible given to me by the congregation at church and also by the several kind-hearted people there. I was surprised to see such different people from Shintonists. Though the church was located eight miles from my work, I visited the church once in a while. I read the verses in Matthew, Chapter 34, and felt confused. When I was nineteen, I was told by my teacher that I looked like my mother, while my sister looked like my father. Then, I realized that my mother was not a step-mother. My mother was fond of my sister because she looked like my father. My father was fond of me because I looked like my mother. I always wanted to do something to serve my country. When I was in the teacher's college, I was in charge of guarding the pictures of the emperor and empress. I was suppose to direct people to protect the pictures in case of an emergency. I was grateful for the duty, because I was assigned such an honorable duty, although I was absent from school very often due to my health. One teacher during my childhood days threw a piece of chalk at a pupil who did not listen to him. Education in those days was that strict. My physics and mathematics teacher invited me for dinner at his home. He said that I was so weak that I should eat good food. His wife gave me a raw egg and other nutritious food. The assistant minister and his mother were both great. His mother said that she had dedicated her

son to the Lord's work and that she should serve him as much as she could. She was the daughter of one of the higher Byakko-tai⁴ members. She was related to the Tokugawas⁵. Reverend Kagawa was fond of the assistant minister throughout his life. Reverend Hiraiwa of the Methodist Church came to Nagano prefecture as a superintendent. His sermon moved me deeply. He said, "You might feel guilty when you become a Christian against your parents' will. However, you will find yourself making your parents and others happy after you are baptized." I was extremely happy to hear that. Later on, when I attended a Thursday evening-meeting, I spoke about Reverend Hiraiwa's meaningful sermon. The meetings at church were held in the evening. On my way back home from the meetings, I had to walk on a mountain trail for a mile or so. I was living in Gifu prefecture at that time. Being scared of foxes, I sang a song which I had learned at church, in a loud voice. I saw foxes drinking water from my house. Walking in the darkness, I did not feel scared at all. I looked up at the shiny moon and felt that the Lord was protecting us all of the time. I crossed a bridge, which my father as village chief, and a neighboring village chief had built across the Kiso River. Since it was only ten p.m., my parents assumed that I had checked into an inn owned by a friend of my father's. When I knocked at the front door, my parents wondered if a fox was knocking at the door. They opened the door after I had knocked on it three times.

It was said that a fox never knocked at a door three times. I made up my mind to become a Christian the following day after I had listened to the sermon given by Reverend Kiraiwa. When I told our minister of my desire to become a Christian, I was warned that six months of Bible study was not good enough to get baptized and that it was rare for a teacher's college graduate to become a Christian. However, I did not yield. I spoke up and said that I would be able to overcome my parents' opposition eventually and I would make myself and my parents happy. After coming back home, I told my father that I would like to become a Christian while both of us were folding the hakama⁶. He got so angry that he hit me twice with a two-foot ruler. He asked me why I had graduated from a teacher's college, I answered that the education I had received at college was visual whereas the teaching I was getting from Christianity was spiritual. I had many problems at that time. My illness, grandfather's mistress and my father's hardship as a village chief were my heart-felt concerns. I did not know how to overcome my worries without the Lord. My father finally understood my seriousness. On the following morning, he told me not to be late for church. I was baptized by Reverend Kuniyara from Nagoya Central Church. Everything looked cheerful and gay after having been baptized. On the way to work, I enjoyed the birds singing and the beautiful day. I told a teacher in a faculty room that I had been baptized. I asked him if he would like to attend church the following Sunday. He asked me who had

baptized me. Though I was renting a room six miles away from my home, I stopped there everytime I went to church. The assistant minister's mother was kind enough to fix lunch for me when I visited her. She was a kind, graceful lady from an aristocratic family. She was use to feeding the members of the Byakko-tai. As I could not attend church during the school term, the minister gave me his written sermons every week. I attended the prayer meetings and taught a kindergarten-age Sunday school during school vacations. The minister praised my father. He said that my father had been helping a lot of people in need. My father delivered bamboo shoots, walnuts and yams to the minister very frequently. Though my father never became a Christian, he was positive about my being a Christian. He even wanted my younger sister to become a Christian. It was me who suggested that my father not let my sister become a Christian. I did that, because I saw terrible things among the ministers in Los Angeles. My sister married a man from a Shinto family, but she was not happy at all. When I returned to Japan, I felt guilty and tried to share my faith with her. Her husband's uncle was a Shinto priest. She said that my God watched me from heaven but the Shinto gods needed to be taken care of by human beings. One stormy day, people became soaking wet when they moved the Shinto altar to a dry place. I prayed for my parents in my daily prayers. My father tried to learn the Bible; however, he felt it difficult to understand the Bible. My best friend during my teaching days married

a high ranking Zen priest. Her husband, who use to be a logic teacher, came to the U.S. for a visit and met the President of the U.S. He opened a branch church in the U.S. He became a Buddhist priest after marriage according to his father's will, though he wanted to become a Christian. He and his wife were invited by the present emperor to the coronation ceremony. They rode in a car with the emperor. Before I left for the U.S., I stayed at Reverend Kawasumi's home in Tokyo for eight months. I was to marry Mrs. Kawasumi's brother. It was my second marriage. Reverend Kawasumi was in charge of giving sermons at Aoyama University and was also a leader of a Christian church. I met him when he returned to Japan from Manchuria. I was one of the rare persons who was a teacher and Christian at the same time. I was asked to hand in my resume for a teaching position in Yamanashi prefecture. They were looking for a Christian lady. My resume impressed them so much that I was hired. I was told to come to Tokyo at once. When I left Kiso, my parents fixed delicious food and my students saw me off. I was a leader of a youth group and my sister-in-law was vice-president of a Christian women's association in Japan. My sister attended meetings almost every day. I had to take care of five girls. Not only her daughter but also a few of a count's daughters were under my care. I myself had been brought up with a few maids and I had to serve like a maid there. In the meantime, Mrs. Kawasumi recommended me as her younger brother's bride. Her brother was in the U.S.

I was serious about her recommendation because I wanted to be away from my mother who I did not get along with. I thought that being away from her might bring a better relationship between us. My home was located in an area with fresh air, but I did not like the wet climate. I was anxious about going to California where a lot of oranges were produced. I completed the procedures for marriage in Tokyo and waited ~~awhile~~. I attended Aoyama University, taking a Bible class and an embroidery class. As I have mentioned before, I was employed by Reverend and Mrs. Kawasumi as a tutor-maid. I took care of children as well as housekeeping. Their only son was a student at Azabu Junior High School. He was a bright student. He said that he would come to me first when he grew to adulthood. However, he died at the age of seventeen. Reverend and Mrs. Kawasumi were shocked by their son's death. After I came to Los Angeles, I found that my husband was a dishwasher. Though he himself was a fine man, I could not stand such a drastic change in my life. He was thirteen years older than I and he had attended a terakoya⁷ during his childhood. Being young and modern, I could not communicate with him very well. I had been informed in Japan that he was a Christian, but I did not think he was really a Christian. He was from a family of the Nichiren sect. I could not help concluding the Reverend Kawasumi had told me a lie. Reverend Kawasumi did not admit that his brother-in-law was as he was. My husband, Suzuki, was the father of my oldest daughter, Ayako. He had tuberculosis

and died six year after our marriage. I made a pledge to the Lord that I would raise Ayako in my faith. Then, I returned to Japan with Ayako. Though I attended church to which I had formerly belonged, I felt somewhat awkward there. The minister's mother had once asked me to marry her son, but I could not say "yes" at that time because of my rheumatism. Anyway, I married very late, at the age of twenty-five or twenty-six. My husband taught me how to write novels.

Q: What did you think of the U.S before coming here?

A: Observing Reverend Kawasumi's home, I imagined that the U.S. must have been a modern country. Reverend Kawasumi had been to the U.S. twice. I thought that most Americans must be kind, for all the ministers in Japan from the U.S. were very kind.

Q: Where did you arrive?

A: I arrived in San Francisco.

Q: Did you go to Angel Island?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: Were you scared there?

A: Yes, I was. I was worried about what was going on.

Q: Did you have a physical examination?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: Did your husband-to-be meet you at the port?

A: We were married in Japan.

Q: I see. You got on a train in San Francisco and came to Los Angeles, didn't you.

A: That's right.

Q: Were you working at that time?

A: I caught the Spanish flu in San Francisco. My husband also caught it through me. When we were sick in bed, my husband's brother came to the hotel from Los Angeles to take care of us. We were lucky enough to be given free treatment by Dr. Kondo whom we had met on the boat. We started for Los Angeles as soon as we could walk.

Q: Were you working then?

A: Yes, I was. Though I wanted to teach, my husband did not let me work outside the home; therefore, I embroidered at home for the Broadway department store. I also called on a handkerchief manufacturer and got orders for embroidery. They liked by embroidery so much that they gave me larger handkerchiefs. The large handkerchiefs were for Hollywood actors, and I got two dollars for each. I obeyed and served my first husband throughout our marriage.

Q: You returned to Japan didn't you?

A: Yes, I did. Then I went back to the U.S. alone and married Matsumoto. Mrs. Mitsumori, who was my husband's niece, introduced Matsumoto to me. Before his death, my first husband asked me to take care of his niece and also to remarry. I appreciated the Lord's protection over us. When I returned to Japan with Ayako, I had only five yen with me. But we survived some how. I attended the Thursday prayer meetings, at which time I returned thanks for the Lord's protection.

Q: How did you meet Mr. Matsumoto?

A: I had a go-between. I and Ayako met him together. The three of us went to see a movie. Ayako was fond of him, for he looked healthy with his dark complexion and sturdy build. She was happy to be given ten cents by him. I did not like him too much, for he let me take off his worn out overcoat and he had some cheap magazines and dirty things in his suitcase. Ayako's father had a light complexion and small build; he wrote a lot of original novels to which I gave the final touches. He won a prize in a newspaper contest.

Q: What was Mr. Matsumoto's occupation at that time?

A: He was a gardener. He had been a farmer in the Imperial Valley, but he had failed in his farming there.

Q: How old was Mr. Matsumoto?

A: He was ten years older than I.

Q: Did you have any children during your second marriage?

A: Yes. Kikuko is Matsumoto's daughter.

Q: Did you work after you remarried?

A: I did domestic work.

Q: You must have had a hard time doing domestic work, because you were use to teaching?

A: My employer wanted a neat home; I was busy in keeping the home in shape. It was not too hard, though. My parents had run an inn once, and I had helped my parents serve a number of customers.

Q: What made you happy at that time?

A: Going to church on Sundays made me happy.

Q: What was the saddest event for you at that time?

A: The death of my husband was the saddest event for me.

My second husband loved Ayako so much that he registered her in his record. After she grew up, Ayako complained that her record had been moved to Matsumoto's. The Matsumotos were all genuine farmers. Being a widow with one child, I did not expect too much of my second husband. My main concern was for Ayako's happiness.

Q: Did you have any problems with your work?

A: No, I did not. My employers were fond of me. My problems started after marrying Matsumoto. We could not understand each other at times, because we were from completely different kinds of families.

Q: What was your life like during the Depression?

A: I'm sure that I was in Japan at that time. I returned to Japan six times. I always pray when I have troubles.

Q: What was the attitude of white people toward the Japanese people?

A: It was not bad at all. My employers told me that the war was between the U.S. government and the Japanese government and that I had nothing to do with it.

Q: Where were you when the Japanese military attacked Pearl Harbor?

A: I was in Pasadena. I worried about my family in Japan, especially my younger brother being drafted. I prayed for peace. My brother, who was a village chief near Mt. Ontake, was planning to construct a military boat. I just prayed for him.

Q: Were you afraid of being in the U.S during the war?

A: No, I was not.

Q: Where were you when you received a notice of evacuation?

A: I was in Pasadena.

Q: What did you feel like when you received the notice?

A: I had been arrested before the evacuation started. Being a teacher of the Japanese language, I was arrested first. Mr. Suematsu was the first male Japanese to be arrested. We were carried to the Pasadena police station in the same car. We were separated after getting off the elevator at the station. I did not know what to do there, because I was not allowed to go to the rest room. Being in my fifties, it was hard for me to be captured there. I had a towel around my neck because of a sore throat. A female police officer told me to take it off right away. However, the policemen there did not treat me as harshly as I expected. Later on, I was moved to the immigration office in San Pedro.

Q: Did you leave Mr. Matsumoto and your children at home?

A: Yes, I did. I wrote letters to my children asking them to take care of their father. Other teachers who had graduated from only a girl's school were not questioned too much. Since I had a degree and had run my own school at home, I was questioned for three hours. I was asked why I had taught the Japanese language. I answered that children of Japanese mothers should know how to communicate with their mothers in Japanese. I taught reading and writing as well as speaking. I did not put katakana⁸ beside kanji⁹.

I placed emphasis on the importance of children learning kanji directly. I taught the Japanese language up to the level of the second year of senior high school. Most of my students became teachers of the Japanese language. I had thirty students at the most. My trial was held on the thirteenth and my number was thirteen. Some teachers hid facts in order to be released by the court.

Q: Did you go to San Pedro from the police station?

A: I think I did.

Q: How long did you stay in San Pedro?

A: I stayed there for months. Then, I was transferred to some other place.

Q: When were you reunited with your family?

A: All of us were sent to Tule Lake together.

Q: What was the assembly center in Santa Anita like?

A: I did not feel at ease there, for there were spies among the Japanese people.

Q: Did you have any idea who the spies were?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: Did you think it was unfair for the Nisei to be captured in the camp?

A: I considered the war era a special period; therefore, I did not judge anything subjectively during the war.

Q: What about the problem of loyalty?

A: Having only daughters, we did not take the draft too personally. I remember that I raised my hand to express my loyalty to the U.S.

Q: What was your hobby at that time?

A: I enjoyed reading the Bible and knitting.

Q: Do you remember the happenings at the camp?

A: Yes, I do.

Q: A number of people were transferred to Jerome or (Hat Mountain), weren't they?

A: Yes. As for me, I did not want to move, for my oldest daughter had graduated from a college in the East, and my younger daughter was attending a college near the camp. I attended church services and prayer meetings very frequently.

Q: When did you come back to California?

A: We came back here before the camp was closed. Matsumoto resumed his gardening, and I worked as a live-out housekeeper for white families. My employers were all kind to me.

Q: Did any white congregation help you settle down after you left the camp?

A: No, not at all.

Q: How did you feel about the problem of education for your children?

A: I wanted them to go through college and they did.

Q: What were their majors?

A: Ayako attended Toyo Eiwa Girl's School in Tokyo, and then she studied conducting at some college in Princeton. During the war, she was a conductor at the Hira camp. She believed that music was important for people even though it was wartime. My younger daughter attended a

high school in camp.

Q: What was her major in college?

A: She majored in mathematics at Occidental College.

Q: Where is Ayako now?

A: She is married. She still teaches music. The younger daughter is also married and has a job relating to mathematics.

Q: In summary, would you like to say anything to the young people of today?

A: I don't want to say anything strict. I regret the fact that I have been too strict with Ayako. Ayako has the impression that I am a strict mother, and she will never change her ideas about me. I am trying to let my daughters decide things for themselves right now. I do not force them to go to church, either. I believe that we should teach only the basics to young people and let them lead their own lives. Watching them with love and affection is the best way. My daughter have established their own happy homes. Anyway, the education I had was old-fashioned and strict.

Q: If you do not mind, I would like to translate this interview into English and publish it in the near future.

A: I do not mind if it's anonymous. I am afraid my daughter might complain that I have exaggerated in my statements.

Q: I will make it anonymous.

Appendix

Obon festival¹ - A Buddhist dancing festival held during the summer season. Page 2

Murasaki Shikibu² - The author of "Tale of Genji." Page 3

Shoji³ - A sliding door made of paper and wood. Page 3

Byakko-tai⁴ - A group of militants in Fukushima prefecture supporting the shogunate of Tokugawa. Page 6

Tokugawas⁵ - The shogunate of the Edo period. Page 6

Hakama⁶ - A pant-skirt outfit worn with the kimono. Page 7

Terakoya⁷ - A private elementary school held at temples.

Page 10

Katakana⁸ - The contracted Japanese syllables. Page 15

Kanji⁹ - A Chinese character. Page 15